

VZCZCXRO2685  
PP RUEHDBU RUEHIK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHBUL #5814/01 3460606  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 120606Z DEC 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4823  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3391  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3376  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC  
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 KABUL 005814

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CR, S/CT, SCA/PAB, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN  
OSD FOR KIMMETT  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, AND POLAD  
RELEASABLE TO NATO/ISAF/AUS/NZ

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [INR](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/SHARANA: A LOOK AT AN AFGHAN BORDER DISTRICT

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: Barmal, one of Paktika Province's five districts bordering the tribal areas of Pakistan, has been the scene of a great deal of insurgent activity since coalition and Afghan forces established an Afghan government presence in April 2005. Government influence in Barmal, a district dominated by the Waziri tribe, has never been strong. That limited government presence was forced out in the fall of 2004 by Taliban fighters, who in turn were, at least partially, displaced by coalition and Afghan forces in April 2005. Since then the district has been actively contested. Progress has been substantial in the last 18 months, but the weakness of the Afghan government in this important border district remains a problem. END SUMMARY.

-----  
Barmal District: West Waziristan  
-----

12. (SBU) Barmal, located on Paktika's Eastern border with Pakistan, is remote from Afghan population centers. Lines of communication and trade do not naturally run to the West and North toward the more urban areas of Afghanistan. Rather, the natural flow of people and goods goes East into Pakistan's tribal areas and the towns of Wana and Miram Shah. These natural geographical ties, common to many border districts, are strengthened in Barmal by strong Waziri tribal connections in North and South Waziristan. Most Waziris live in Pakistan with only a small element of the tribe residing in Afghanistan--almost all in Barmal district-- where they make up nearly 100 percent of the local population. As a minority in Afghanistan, Waziris have a natural connection to tribal counterparts in Pakistan.

-----  
Much Progress, Much More Needed  
-----

13. (SBU) Barmal district was taken by insurgents in the fall of 2004, killing or displacing the few Afghan government police and administrators in the district center. In April 2005, the district center town of Barmal Bazaar was reoccupied by coalition and Afghan military units, a forward operating base was established, and a new District Commissioner and Chief of Police were installed. Afghan National Army (ANA) and U.S. troops now have a significant

presence in Barmal. The ANA in Barmal are being mentored by an American military Embedded Training Team (ETT) and close cooperation is evident between the ANA and American units located in the district. The American presence has also brought several projects, at least two new schools, a new district center building, a new police station, a new primary care clinic, and a cobblestone road complete with solar street lights for the Bazaar. However much remains to be done.

-----  
GOA Has Limited Reach  
-----

¶4. (SBU) While there is an Afghan government presence in Barmal, its effect on the general population is minimal. Regular travelers and insurgents alike still move through the many mountain passes extending into Pakistan. Afghan government presence in the district center has had little effect on the insurgents' movement or their influence on the local population. Lack of economic opportunity in Barmal, and in Afghanistan in general, drive many from Barmal's villages to take the difficult six-hour ride to Miram Shah to seek employment in Pakistan. How many fall prey to insurgent recruiters is unknown, but locals have been identified among those killed during encounters with the ANA and coalition elements in Barmal.

¶5. (SBU) In interviews conducted on November 1 in the village of Mangretay (12 kilometers from the Pakistan border), village elders stated that the people were not against the Karzai government, but rather they did not know the government. One elder remarked that for 50 or 60 years, as far back as anyone could remember, there had been no

KABUL 00005814 002 OF 003

Afghan government presence in Barmal. The village elders asked for more Afghan police and ANA to protect them from the Taliban. They reported that if they did not provide food or shelter to the insurgents, they were in danger. Six days later on November 7, coalition elements were attacked by a sizable group of insurgents in this same village.

-----  
Able District Officials Conduct Outreach  
-----

¶6. (SBU) Barmal is fortunate to have a young, experienced, and intelligent district commissioner. District commissioner Mohammed Mobeen, seven months on the job and 35 years old, has already been the chief of police in Orgun, and the district commissioner of both the Zeruk and Khair Khot districts of Paktika. Mobeen, assisted by three other government representatives, the chief of police, an education ministry representative, and the director of documents and regulations, is working to bridge the perceived gulf between the appointed government outsiders and the local tribal and religious leaders. Mobeen explained that he spends half of each day working as district commissioner and the other half in the Mosque explaining Islam to the people. In this way he demonstrates his commitment to Islam and that he is not a slave to outsiders.

¶7. (SBU) Mobeen's main criticism is not about the people in his district or the insurgents but about the government. Mobeen stated that the provincial and national governments need to check on their people in the districts. The Provincial government, the governor, the chief of police, the line ministry directors all need to travel to the districts and check on their people. He said they needed to check and see if they are honest and if they need assistance. He went so far as to say that "Karzai is sleeping," that he must hold the governors accountable for the performance of the government and its relationship to the people in the districts.

-----  
Police Lack Basic Supplies  
-----

-----  
¶8. (SBU) Barmal is far from the Provincial capital of Sharana, and Sharana is far from Kabul. Barmal's police suffer from this distance. They also suffer from systemic inefficiency, neglect, and very likely corruption. Supplies simply do not get to Barmal from Sharana. While the police have a new five-room building, they have no winter clothing, little ammunition, and they lack bedding, boots, and fuel for the two pickup trucks that serve the entire district. The nine ANP assigned to Barmal are supplemented with 21 contract police paid for by the governor. These contract police lack even the summer uniforms common to the ANP. With only one Thuraya phone for communication, 25 AK 47s, 1000 rounds of 7.62x39, AK47 ammunition and only 1 RPG, the police are clearly not prepared for any concerted assault on the district. Lacking boots, coats, winter uniforms, and fuel, the police are not even prepared for the Afghan winter.

-----  
COMMENT  
-----

¶9. (SBU) Barmal District faces many of the same problems as other districts in Paktika. Remoteness from the center is a problem but it is made worse by the nearly wholesale failure of the police and other provincial government agencies to provide for their people in the field. In Sarobi, Dila, Jani Khel, Yosef Khel, Shaklabad, and Yaya Khel districts like Barmal, the police lack uniforms, winter equipment, vehicles, ammunition, and fuel for the vehicles. The insurgency is clearly a problem but severe inefficiency and lack of even basic leadership and discipline among many of Paktika's provincial and district government leaders and directors are severely hampering the ability of the Karzai government to fight the insurgency and to win the hearts and

KABUL 00005814 003 OF 003

minds of the Afghan people by offering a positive alternative. END COMMENT.  
NEUMANN